



Short Safety Subject

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www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Child Water Safety Tips

With the summer and beach season approaching, the deaths and injuries are a grim reminder of how much power water wields.



A close eye and a learned response can make the difference between life and death.

Children can drown in as little as 3 inches of water.

After submersion for four or five minutes, a child faces irreversible brain damage or death.

It's just so critical. They have to be watched every second they are near the water. Never turn your back on your child. It doesn't even take a second.

Each year, more than 1,400 children drown in the United States. Of those, 600 are infants or preschoolers. About 70 percent of the drowning occur in backyard pools and 20 percent happen in relatives' pools.

But it's not just pools and oceans where drowning danger lurks. Bathtubs and buckets at home can cause problems. Parents should never leave infants or toddlers alone in tubs, and should make sure water is not left in tubs, basins or buckets.

Children are so top-heavy, it's easy for them to topple into things.

It is recommended that parents learn CPR and take precautions - such as installing fences around pools and making sure doors and windows leading to pools cannot be easily opened. Pools should be protected in the off season with covers that don't collect water. A puddle can be just as deadly as a deep end of the pool.

Pretend you are an 18-month old and see what they can do. You have to think like that. People think they are being paranoid. But if they are not cautious, one slip up could be the worst one.

Another suggested safety step is to enroll children in swimming lessons. Many parents wonder whether their sons and daughters are old enough for the classes. Babies as young as 9 months old can benefit from the lessons.

Infants and toddlers won't learn to become Olympic swimmers, but they will get comfortable with the idea of being in water. Instructors teach them how to reach pool walls and climb out.

It paves the way for future learning experiences. As they get older, they learn techniques and how to breath in the water. Those can prove to be lifesavers in the long run.

The scariest part about children falling into water, is that they can fall to the bottom of a pool and not have the know-how to get back to the top.

Everyone's concept of drowning is that people are going to struggle and alert someone to them. That's not always the case. Sometimes, children slip quietly under the water and not make it back to the surface.

Despite taking safety measures, parents must be ready for a water emergency. Every adult should know life-saving techniques and be ready at a second's notice to use them.

Every minute counts. If an adult is home alone and finds a child unconscious in the water, they should call 911 first and then start CPR. If there are several people home, one should summon help while others start trying to resuscitate the child.

The best chances of survival happen right then and there.

WATER SAFETY TIPS

Authorities recommend the following tips to prevent children from drowning:

- Never leave children unattended around any body of water.
- Be aware of streams, ponds, creeks and ditches that may be located on or near your property. If a child is missing, search water areas first to save valuable seconds.
- Know that standing water left in buckets, wading pools, bathtubs and toilets can be dangerous to toddlers, who are top-heavy and have a tendency to fall headfirst.
- Don't depend on flotation devices as substitutes for supervision. Make sure you continue to watch them, even if they are wearing the device.
- Make sure swimming pools have a four-sided fence that is at least 5 feet tall. The fences should have locks on their gates.
- If you have an above-ground pool, make sure the ladder into the pool is up and inaccessible to children when adults are not around.
- Learn CPR. American Red Cross offices and YMCA frequently offer classes in the lifesaving technique.